

REMARKS

Applicants thank Examiner O'Hern for the analysis contained in the Advisory Action. While applicants do not agree with the Examiner's analysis, the feedback is helpful.

Applicants have carefully considered the cited art along with the Examiner's comments. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the application in view of the foregoing claim amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-10 are pending in the application, of which Claim 1 has been amended.

"Embedded within the rubber slab"

Claim 1 called for a rigidifying grid of reinforcing wire "embedded" within the rubber slab. The Examiner made a point that "the claims do not require all of the members to be embedded." Claim 1 has now been amended to specify that the wires extending between the sides are embedded and the wires extending between the ends are embedded. It is respectfully submitted that this amendment distinguishes the present invention over Rue, as the only members that Rue has extending between the sides are plates 20 that sandwich the rubber but are not embedded in the rubber.

"Degree of flexibility"

The Examiner made a point that a "degree of flexibility of the mat" has not been clearly defined. The present invention as claimed includes a "flexible" rubber slab. Even with reinforcing wire, it retains a degree of flexibility. This feature distinguishes the present invention over Rue, which discloses a rigid frame.

Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Rue. Claims 2-10 are also submitted to be patentable, both for their dependence (directly or indirectly) from Claim 1, and for the additional subject matter they recite.

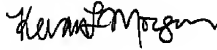
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments, applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore request the early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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